Inclusion of India in the List of Countries making Narcotics

†928. PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have registered any protest or taken any action on the inclusion of India's name by USA in the list of the countries making narcotics; and

(b) if so, USA's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) In November, the US Government presented Part I of its annual International Norcotics Control Strategy Report to the US Congress. The report is in pursuance of the US Foreign Assistance Act 1996 on international efforts to meet the goals and objectives of the 1988 UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics and Psychotropic Substance.

Part I of the report is a simple listing of countries, which are *either illicit drug producing or drug transit countries.* With major drug producing countries in India's neighbourhood, transit of drugs through India as a possibility is a source of conern, including to the Government of India. The Final Report which was submitted to the US Congress in 1999, acknowledges that India has taken adequate steps on its own to achieve the objectives of the 1988 United Nations Convention.

(c) Does not arise.

Release of Captives of India and Pakistan

†929. SHRI RAMJI LAL:
SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan had released the captives of each other's country on 21st March, 1999;

(b) if so, the category-wise number of captives released by each country;

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(c) the category-wise number* of captives who are still in jails in India and Pakistan separately;

(d) whether negotiations have been initiated to release the remaining captive, and

(e) if so, the details thereof and by when the remaining captives are likely to be released?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (e) On 22nd March, 1999,14 Indian civilian prisoners were released by Pakistan and 43 Pakistani civilian prisoners were released by India.

On the basis of available information, 813 Indian civilian prisoners and 67 fishermen are believed to be under detention in Pakistani jails. In addition, 54 missing Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) are also believed to be under detention in Pakistani jails. 137 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 122 Pakistani fishermen are under detention in India.

The issue of early release and repatriation of detainees has been taken up repeatedly and at all levels, with the Government of Pakistan. During his visit to Lahore on February 20-21, 1999, Prime Minister raised this issue with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the two sides appointed a 2 member committee at Ministerial level to examine humanitarian issue relating to civilian detainees and the missing POWs. In the official level India-Pakistan meeting held in Islamabad on March 5-6, 1999, to discuss modalities for the early release of civilian prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody, it was, *inter-alia* decided that:

(i) In keeping with humanitarian considerations as well as legal and administrative requirements of the two sides, civilian prisoners of both countries, whose national status has been confirmed, and who have already completed their sentences, should be released and repatriated expeditiously; and

(ii) that fishermen, who inadvertently stray into each other's territorial waters, should be released expeditiously along with their boats after necessary investigations are completed and travel documents made available.

The issue of the missing Indian POWs was also raised in the official level discussions held on March 5-6, 1999. The Pakistani side stated that there were no Indian POWs in its custody, but agreed to re-examine the matters afresh.

There are on going discussions through diplomatic channels with Pakistan for the early release of detainees in each other's custody.

Negotiation between Indian Editor and Pakistan's Former Foreign Secretary

930. SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the backdoor negotiations between India and Pakistan through Editor, Mr. R.K. Mishra and Pakistan former Foreign Secretary Niaz Naik had official blessings of both countries;

(b) whether any formula has been discussed there; and

(c) if so, what were the contents?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) It is normal for countries to have a variety of processes of communication, both official and non-official. From the Pakistan side, Mr. Niaz Naik was sent to India in June, 1999. He was told categorically that Pakistan's armed intrusion and aggression in Kargil would have to be vacated. The same message was then conveyed to the Pakistan side by Shri R.K. Mishra, who visited Islamabad in the same month. There was no divergence in what was communicated to Pakistan officially or through non-official channels.

Indian detainees in the Myanmar jail

931. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian detainees in the Myanmar jail with their names and ages o'conviction;

(b) whether Government have taken up consultation with the Myanmar Government; and

(c) whether there is any plan of any proposal under